

## Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 AID-05 IO-10 /065 W

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O R 121001Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5235

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

USDEL JEC PARIS

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EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT VS

SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE REACTION TO PRESIDENT FORD'S ADDRESS ON US

FOREIGN RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY. VIETNAMESE REACTION TO PRES FORD'S ADDRESS GENERALLY FAVORABLE AND SAGGING VIETNAMESE MORALE BOOSTED BY REQUEST FOR SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY AID AND EMPHASIS ON SPECIAL OBLIGATION US HAS TOWARD VIETNAM. HOWEVER, NUMBER RANKING OFFICIALS EXPRESSED VIEW THA

ADDRESS NOT STRONG ENOUGH. OTHERS WHO NURTURED HOPE OF US MILITARY INTERVENTION TO HALT OFFENSIVE WERE DISAPPOINTED THAT SPEECH DID NOT GO FAR ENOUGH. END SUMMARY.

2. IMMEDIATE IMPACT OF PRES FORD'S ADDRESS ON VIETNAMESE PEOPLE HAS BEEN GENERALLY FAVORABLE. NUMBER ACADEMICIANS AND CIVIL SERVANTS IN SAIGON EXPRESSED VIEW THAT ADDRESS WAS "SUPPORTIVE" AND MAJOR BOOST TO SAGGING MORALE OF VN PEOPLE AND ARMED FORCES. ADDITIONALLY, AS PRES FORD WAS UNKNOWN QUANTITY FOR MANY VIETNAMESE, ADDRESS SERVED TO REEMPHASIZE FACT AMERICAN PRESIDENT STILL BELIEVES US HAS SPECIAL OBLIGATION TO ASSIST SOUTH VIETNAM. FEW OFFICIALS HOWEVER BELIEVE CONGRESS WILL APPROVE PRES FORD'S PROPOSALS IN THEIR ENTIRETY AND SOME THINK NORTH VIETNAM TAKEOVER BY MILITARY OR POLITICAL MEANS MERELY MATTER OF TIME. OTHER VIETNAMESE WHO

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NORMALLY FOLLOW AMERICAN AFFAIRS CLOSELY OR THOSE WHO STILL

NURTURE HOPE THAT DIRECT US MILITARY FORCE WILL BE USED TO HALT OFFENSIVE, REACTED TO SPEECH WITH BITTERNESS AND DISAPPOINTMENT.

3. ADVANCE NOTICE AND CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION CONCERNING ADDRESS WERE CARRIED IN ALL SAIGON DAILIES IN RECENT DAYS AND MANY VIETNAMESE REPORTED LISTENING TO ADDRESS WHICH WAS BROADCAST HERE IN ENGLISH. ALL SAIGON DAILIES CARRIED BANNER HEADLINES WHICH TENDED EMPHASIZE EMERGENCY NATURE OF PROPOSAL AND FACT PRES CALLED ON HANOI TO HALT MILITARY ACTIVITY IN SVN. RADIO AND TV STATIONS CARRIED EXCERPTS OF ADDRESS AND FAVORABLE COMMENTARY ON EVENT AT FREQUENT INTERVALS THROUGHOUT DAY AND EVENING OF APR 10.

4. AT A NEWS CONFERENCE HELD AT GVN PRESS CENTER FOLLOWING ADDRESS, GOVT SPOKESMAN SAID: "THE RVN PEOPLE AND ARMED FORCES WERE VERY ELATED OVER THE REAFFIRMATION OF US COMMITMENTS AIMED AT ASSISTING THE RVN'S STRUGGLE AGAINST THE NORTH VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST AGGRESSORS. ONCE AGAIN, THESE COMMITMENTS PROVE CONTINUITY OF US GOVT'S POLICY TOWARD VIETNAM ISSUE WHICH HAS BEEN AFFIRMED BY FIVE SUCCESSIVE PRESIDENTS AND 12 SESSIONS OF US CONGRESS OVER 20 YEARS. TO RVN PEOPLE AND ARMED FORCES, WHO ARE FACING A DIFFICULT AND EXTREMELY SERIOUS SITUATION, THESE COMMITMENTS AND ASSISTANCE ENCOURAGE THEM TO PERSIST IN STRUGGLE FOR THEIR OWN SURVIVAL AND TO PROTECT AND BUILD A LIFE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR DESIRES FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM."

5. VIETNAMESE WHO REACTED FAVORABLY TO ADDRESS GENERALLY STRESSED FACT THAT PRES FORD EMPHASIZED SPECIAL US/VIETNAMESE RELATIONSHIP AND ALSO SPECIAL OBLIGATION OF US TOWARD VIETNAM, CALLED ON HANOI TO CEASE MILITARY ACTIVITY IMMEDIATELY, AND SENT DIPLOMATIC NOTES TO SOVIET UNION AND PRC. MOST IMPORTANT ITEM IN SPEECH, ACCORDING TO NUMBER EMBASSY CONTACTS, WAS AMOUNT OF AID REQUESTED AND FACT IT WAS "MILITARY" AID. CITING RECENT SPECULATION THAT REQUEST WOULD BE FOR HUMANITARIAN AID ONLY, EMBASSY CONTACTS EXPRESSED PLEASANT SURPRISE AT AMOUNT REQUESTED AND TIME LIMIT SET BY PRES FOR CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE WHICH THEY BELIEVE TO EMPHASIZE URGENCY OF CURRENT SITUATION IN SVN. HIGH RANKING ARMY OFFICER SAID: "AT LEAST PRES SUPPORTS US AND EVEN THAT WILL GIVE STRONG BOOST TO OUR MORALE." HE ALSO DECLARED THAT HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH SENSE OF URGENCY WHICH PRESIDENT'S SPEECH REFLECTED AND SAID "TIME IS AS CRITICAL AS SUPPLIES THEMSELVES."

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6. SMALL BUT INFLUENTIAL NUMBER VIETNAMESE WASHINGTON WATCHERS COMPLAINED TO US THAT ADDRESS NOT STRONG ENOUGH AND/OR TIME FOR TALKING LONG PAST. ONE SENIOR GVN OFFICIAL SAID "SINGLE B-52 STRIKE WOULD DO MORE FOR MORALE OF VIETNAMESE THAN ALL FANCY WORDS." CONTENDING THAT HE BELIEVED COMMUNISTS ARE CAREFULLY WATCHING SITUATION AND ARE POISED TO EXPLOIT IT MILITARILY, SAME OFFICIAL EMPHASIZED THAT NEXT FEW DAYS WOULD

BE CRITICAL PERIOD FOR SVN. HE NOTED THAT INCREASING NUMBER  
GVN OFFICIALS AND INTELLECTUALS SLOWLY ACCEPTING REALITY THAT  
US SUPPORT WILL NOT BE FORTHCOMING AND DEMISE FOR RVN SIMPLY  
MATTER OF TIME.

7. SENIOR VIETNAMESE ADVISOR TO AAFLI SAID HE THOUGHT PRES "DID ABOUT  
THE

BEST HE COULD UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND THAT BASICALLY IT WAS  
A GOOD SPEECH," BUT ADDED THAT PRES FORD HAD TALKED ABOUT POS-  
SIBILITY OF EVACUATING LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES" AND "SOME  
VIETNAMESE WILL INTERPRET THIS AS SIGN THAT US HAS GIVEN UP ON  
SOUTH VIETNAM." SAME OFFICIAL NOTED THAT "ONE MISSING ELEMENT  
IN SPEECH, THE THING MOST VIETNAMESE WERE WAITING FOR PRES FORD  
TO SAY, WAS A THREAT TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE OF MILITARY INTER-  
VENTION." ON BALANCE THOUGH, AAFLI OFFICIAL BELIEVE VIETNAMESE  
WOULD BE ENCOURAGED BY ADDRESS BUT DISCOURAGED THAT SPEECH DID  
NOT GO FAR ENOUGH.

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## Message Attributes

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